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RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC
INFO RUEHXC/ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 2509
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 MEXICO 001185

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

STATE FOR WHA/MEX, WHA/PDA,
STATE FOR OES/IHB, PA, CAPRESS
STATE FOR MED/DASHO (MCFADDEN, RINALDO, KEYES)
STATE FOR MED/DIR (PENNER)
STATE FOR DS/IP/WHA
CDC FOR CCID/NCPDCID, CCID/NCIRD and COGH/DGPPC
DHS FOR CBP
USDA FOR USTA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CVIS](#) [CASC](#) [KFLU](#) [KSQA](#) [TBIO](#) [MX](#)
SUBJECT: SITREP 4 - Swine Flu Outbreak in Mexico City

REF: MEXICO 1173

1. (U) SUMMARY:

The GOM announced that schools across Mexico will remain closed until May 6. Mission Mexico decided to suspend all non-essential public services at Embassy Mexico and the nine Consulates until May 6. The EACs decided on April 27 to defer all non-essential TDY travel to Mexico. The Charge held a virtual Town Hall meeting with Embassy staff and family members to provide information about the outbreak and to answer questions. Management distributed emergency preparedness information to Embassy staff and provided surgical masks to employees upon request.

2. (U) MEXICAN GOVERNMENT ACTIONS:

The Secretary of Health stated in a press conference on April 27:
--Schools will be closed across Mexico until May 6.
--COFEPRIS (Mexico's FDA) is facilitating supplies of oseltamivir; Mexico has one million doses of oseltamivir and is expecting another 400,000 doses. This medicine will be provided under strict medical control to avoid viral resistance.
--The GOM remains focused controlling the spread of the influenza outbreak.
--The number of cases could increase, and preventative measures could be strengthened.
--Mexico has two labs to detect the virus, the National Epidemiological Reference Institute (INDRE - the Mexican CDC equivalent) and another in the State of Vera Cruz. INDRE is processing 15 tests April 27 and another 100 April 28. Operations at the Vera Cruz lab are still to be determined.

The Mexico City public transportations are operating as usual. Both systems report that passenger volumes are down between 30 and 50 percent. The public

transportation system is taking protective measures including frequent cleaning of stations, and providing masks and gloves to employees. Officials confirm that there is an active discussion about possibly closing the public transport system, but no decision has been made.

NORTHCOM donated 108,000 kits of personal protection equipment (PPE) to Mexico January 2009. These kits have been distributed as follows:

- 50,000 to the Ministry of Health
- 10,000 to the Ministry of Defense
- 9,000 to the Navy
- The remaining kits have been distributed to Mexican state authorities.

13. (U) ACTIONS BY NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Many private organizations have cancelled events in support of the GOM's recommendations against large public gatherings.

14. (SBU) STATISTICS:

The Secretary of Health reported:

- 1995 people have been hospitalized;
- 775 remain hospitalized;
- 1070 have been treated and discharged.
- 149 individuals have died.

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According to the CDC, there are:

- 26 lab confirmed cases of swine flu
- 7 confirmed swine flu deaths (# may rise)

CDC officials are working with the GOM to conduct field investigations of the 26 confirmed cases. To date, they have collected the following information:

AGE:

- Less than 5 yrs - 5
- 5-19 yrs - 4
- 20-39yrs - 9
- 40-59 yrs - 7
- 60+ yrs - 1

LOCATION:

- Oaxaca - 1
- DF - 17
- Mexico State - 7
- Veracruz - 1

CDC also reports that of 4 case reviews available - 2 were exposed to pigs within 2 weeks of illness, and all were hospitalized.

We continue to have problems obtaining consistent government statistical data.

15. (U) MANAGEMENT ISSUES:

The EAC met twice on April 27 to review tripwires and discuss developments with the swine flu outbreak. The EAC decided to defer all non-essential TDY travel to Mexico in keeping with the April 27 CDC guidelines.

The Embassy distributed surgical masks to mission employees.

The Management Section distributed emergency preparedness guidance.

The Charge held a virtual Town Hall meeting with Mission Mexico staff to provide information about the swine flu

outbreak and to answer questions from Embassy staff and family members.

The Charge held a conference call with principal officers at all constituent posts in which she asked Principal Officers to review trip wires, conduct EACs and offer liberal leave to employees. She requested that each post review warden lists and prepare to send advisories to the AMCIT community.

16. (U) SECURITY ISSUES:

RSOs at Mission Mexico Consulates have been asked to review emergency supplies and vendors as well as work with the local guards and diplomatic police to develop contingencies in case of significant absenteeism.

17. (U) CONSULAR ISSUES:

Following the GOM's announcement to close schools throughout Mexico, the Mission decided to suspend all non-essential public services at the Embassy and Consulates until May 6. A decision regarding immigrant visa appointments at the U.S. Consulate General in Ciudad Juarez will be made on April 28. Operations at the U.S. consular agencies throughout Mexico may be curtailed.

The Embassy issued an updated warden message April 27,

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the fourth in four days. The message refers to the latest CD travel notice for Mexico and explains the suspension of consular services.

Approximately one third of passport applicants with appointments on April 28 have deferred their appointments.

Embassy Mexico received approximately 100 swine-flu related calls on April 26 and approximately 120 calls on April 27. Most of the callers were inquiring about the schedule for Consular Services (non-essential public services have been suspended) and travel restrictions to the U.S.

18. (U) BORDER ISSUES:

The Secretary of Health announced that probable swine flu deaths have now been reported in 10 of 32 states in Mexico.

19. (U) MEDIA REACTION/GENERAL POPULATION SENTIMENTS:

All Mexico City newspapers continue featuring front-page coverage of developments in the swine flu outbreak. Excelsior, El Financiero and El Economista focused on the economic impact of the disease. Other newspapers ran a headline that suggests all Mexico City is closed for business. Photographs depict an empty city.

Opinion pieces are mixed. Many opinion makers like Milenio editorial directors Ciro Gomez Leyva and Carlos Marin believe the government has acted reasonably well. "At last the state is working as such," wrote Gomez Leyva. "Without a doubt, the federal government has acted with transparency," added Excelsior's Francisco Zea. Government critics, however, criticize the government for "taking too long" in announcing and reacting to the outbreak. The electronic media continues reporting minute by minute, including the latest measure Mexico's federal

government took to cancel classes in all the country at least until May 6, the statement by DHS Secretary Napolitano and the reissuing of an OMS alert.

10. (U) ECONOMIC IMPACT

BUSINESS CLIMATE: Mexican government and private sector contacts report business as usual. The Secretary of Labor had asked employers to be flexible with absenteeism due to illness and childcare issues and encouraged employers to consider allowing employees to telecommute. However, most employees are reporting to work. Any decreased commercial activity is largely a result of taking precautions, rather than as a direct result of illness itself. The Economic Development Secretariat of the Mexico City government calculated the economic losses last weekend to have reached 3 billion pesos (USD 213 million), and are projected to reach USD 990 million by May 6. Restaurants, bars, and movie theaters are nearly empty, and Mexico's leisure and retail sectors face a sharp decline as diners and shoppers are heeding official warnings to avoid public gatherings, and staying home. The manufacturing sector reports some absenteeism, due to childcare issues, but no delays in the supply chain or cancellations of orders. Many companies have cancelled travel to Mexico for employees not based here. China, Russia, Ukraine, and Nicaragua have reportedly closed

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their borders to Mexican exports Q specifically pork products.

MACROECONOMIC IMPACT: Finance Minister Carstens said today that the outbreak will have a 'temporary' negative impact on the economy, but said it was too soon to say how much. The stock exchange dropped 3.34% in today's trading. Retail dollars were sold at 14.10 pesos to the dollar, down from 13.30 at the end of last week.

U.S.-BOUND FLIGHTS: Mexico City international airport (AICM) averages 136 daily flights to and from the U.S., i.e. nearly 70 flights in either direction. To date, there has been no reduction in flight or pax volumes at the airport. Toluca's only international flights are w/ Continental, 1-2 per day.

FOOD SUPPLIES: The Central de Abastos, located in eastern Mexico City is the world's largest food distribution center, with 8,000 trucks and 26,000 tons of goods per day. The Central's director general reports directly to Mayor Ebrard. He has instructions to keep the Central operating at all costs, since it is key to feeding Mexico City. While the potential closure of Mexico City's mass transit system would affect employees ability to report to work, the Central should be able to -- and is preparing to -- continue operations.

Mexico's largest retail chain reports that exports, imports and supplies at domestic stores are normal. There was a spike in sales over the weekend which included increased sales of disinfectants, Vitamin C, over the counter medicines and face masks.

BASSETT